

### Mr Millan backs down on Scottish colleges

by Judith Judd  
Mr Bruce Millan, Secretary of State for Scotland, last week backed down from his controversial proposals to cut teacher education numbers, re-privatising one college and deferring his decision on three more.  
In answer to a written parliamentary question from Mr William Ross, MP for Kilmarnock, he announced that he would allow an intake in all 10 Scottish colleges this autumn, though the total of students admitted would be slightly less than he previously envisaged.  
A new consultative paper to replace the first, multi-criticized one, says that Craigieburn College should be saved by being given some of the students who would otherwise have gone to Notre Dame, Scotland's other Roman Catholic College.  
Mr Millan will look at the possibility of diversification and alternative uses for the other three colleges threatened with closure and has deferred his decision on them for a year.  
The paper recognizes the difficulties involved in transferring the female physical education colleges to Dundee and has called for a detailed study of this, a tribute to the college's well-informed campaign. However, alternative uses for the Dunfermline college in further or

### Steady decline in teacher training places

higher education, nurse training, or sport are to be explored.  
At Craigie College in Ayr and Cullendar Park in Falkirk alternative uses for all or part of the buildings will also be investigated. In Ayr Strathclyde Regional Council and the Ayrshire and Arran Health Board will be approached to discuss further education or nurse training at the college. Similar talks will be held over the future of Cullendar Park.  
The other six colleges—Aberdeen, Dundee, Hamilton, Moray House, Jordonhill and Notre Dame—should remain open, the paper says but some of their accommodation should be used for purposes other than teacher education.  
Whatever happens, there will be redundancies and Mr Millan is asking each college to calculate what academic staff it will need.  
The paper lays greater stress on in-service training than the original document, in response to criticisms from college lecturers but says that neither the development of such training nor diversification will use all the present staff and buildings.  
The proposed intake for the colleges for the autumn is reduced by a total of 2.10 places. The final decision on the future of the colleges will be announced later this year.

### Professor Dahrendorf suggests new multiversity concept

by Frances Gibb  
A new kind of higher education institution—a multiversity—was proposed by Professor Ralf Dahrendorf, director of the London School of Economics, in London this week.  
In the last of four lectures on education organized by the Conservative Party, Professor Dahrendorf said that universities should not be geared directly to the training of people for professions and jobs, nor should they be centres of teaching and research as was the traditional nineteenth century notion of them.  
What was needed was a new concept of a multiversity, with a variety of courses, both practical, theoretical and post-experience, for a variety of people. It would provide opportunity for teaching and research in the old sense, and a high degree of training, which was not too specialized.  
Professor Dahrendorf attacked the idea that universities should be seen as part of the training process for professions and jobs. The two were separate, he said.  
New should universities be expanded to promote economic growth. Advanced countries, such as Britain, Germany and America needed more trained manpower, but it could not be supplied by the growth of higher education.  
Universities could not satisfy all the practical needs of professions and there were better ways of bridging the gaps than by expanding universities.  
More and more jobs required more training. There was an in-

### Campaign to increase poly places

by Judith Judd  
A campaign to win the same proportion of higher education places for the colleges and polytechnics as for the universities is being mounted by some local authorities.  
The Government is expected to announce soon how the 40,000 additional places allocated for higher education in 1981 will be divided.  
They are growing among chief education officers that the expansion in the local authority sector will be so small that it will threaten the survival of some former colleges of education which need students for diversified courses.  
The indications are that the lion's share of the proposed 560,000 places will go to the universities and the University Grants Committee has written to them suggesting that their total will be about 295,000. The present figures are 273,000 in the universities and 247,000 outside them.  
But teaching and research, old sense needed to be added. There was a concern with the apparent privileging of doing pure research at the same privileges.  
If these differences were provided within industry, they would have to be provided for research to be set up.  
But it was important education institutions were the idea of citizenship was to remain an empty word.

### Government urged to start full time overseas students review

by Sue Reid  
The Government is to be urged to establish a standing commission, with policy-making and advisory powers, to keep overseas student affairs under full review.  
The call will be made in a confidential draft document, due to be circulated at next week's Commonwealth conference and prepared jointly in the last month by the Overseas Student Affairs and the Council for Education in the Commonwealth.  
It will argue for a standing body made up of representatives of organizations concerned with overseas students and members of interested Government departments, including the Department of Education and the Ministry of Overseas Development, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department of Employment.  
The document, which is being drawn up in consultation with the British Council and the Commonwealth secretariat, will maintain that a recognized commission is needed to ensure better coordination between Government departments to deal with the crucial issue of overseas students. It will also help draw together future policy on fees and hardship allowances for foreign students in Britain.  
Lord Glenconner, chairman of the UKCOSA, and Mr Anthony Kershaw, Conservative MP for Stroud and a joint chairman of CEC, proposed the document. At a CEC meeting last month a small working

party was set up, which has since been hurriedly preparing an initial draft of the document outlining the standing commission plan. It will be circulated to Government ministers including Mrs Williams, the Secretary of State for Education and Science, if the Commonwealth conference proves an effective "soundboard".  
The latest fee increases, and the prospect of further rises for overseas students, are known to have alarmed the UKCOSA, the British Council and the CEC. They are concerned over lack of coordination among interested parties in Whitehall departments and would like to win backing for the commission scheme from politicians on both sides.  
Mrs Williams, who will be aware that such a scheme has been informally discussed among organizations concerned with overseas students in the past, will not formally receive the working party's final proposal document until later this year.  
Membership of the standing body has not been decided but, if established, it will, inevitably include representatives of the UKCOSA, the British Council and the CEC. An independent chairman would also be appointed.  
Mr Kershaw said this week: "We want to press for better Government machinery to coordinate overseas student affairs. We decided to produce this paper to see what could be done about improving the organization of overseas students, especially in the light of the drastic fee increases."

Lady Pickthorn, liaison officer for the CEC, maintained the commission would identify and forecast future problems regarding overseas students and develop solutions.  
The Government is planning to reduce the number of overseas students from the present 80,000 to between 60,000 and 65,000 as soon as is feasible. When plans for the increase in tuition fees were disclosed last December the DES maintained that numbers had risen from 31,000 in 1967-68.  
British Council figures show that what all overseas students, including for instance trainee nurses, are taken into account there are fewer from the Commonwealth than other parts of the world. But Commonwealth students, it claimed, made up the largest proportion from the developing world.  
In the last academic year the number of overseas students in further education colleges rose by more than 6,000. Universities took 3,500 more foreign students than the previous year and polytechnics 2,900.  
Twenty five per cent of all foreign students in Britain study in London. But a recent attempt by the (former) London Education Authority to introduce a controversial overseas students quota system in its five polytechnics: it funds was opposed by the colleges. Many feared that some courses, particularly those concerned with engineering, science and technology, would be forced to close through lack of students if the foreign recruits were barred.

### Physics BEd is 'below standard'

by Clive Cookson, Science Correspondent  
The overwhelming majority of BEd degrees in physics are below the standard of a university ordinary degree with a physics content, according to a survey by the Institute of Physics.  
A working party found that only a handful of BEd courses teach physics to a standard acceptable as a qualification towards professional membership, and the Institute has accepted its recommendations.  
In the current issue of the Institute's journal, *Physics Bulletin*, Professor Daphne Jackson of Surrey University, chairman of the membership committee, and Mr C. A. Crofts, headmaster of Chorlton High School and chairman of the working party, expressed concern with BEd graduates. "The question simply does not fit them for advanced work" are teaching sixth form physics.  
The implications of the survey, they say, "should be a matter of concern to all members of this Institute, and particularly to industrialists who appear to be increasingly anxious that their technicians entrants and craft apprentices should have been exposed to some physics whilst at school."  
"We are concerned about the position of BEd graduates who seek employment outside teaching and whose qualifications do not meet the standards expected for professional status and the Institute must be aware of this."  
The questionnaire and visits showed, not surprisingly, that colleges of education are in a state of deep uncertainty. Many colleges have lost reputable physics departments and in a number of places physics has been absorbed into physical science activities with considerable dilution of the physics content. The remaining physics departments are far from certain of their continued existence.  
Therefore the Institute feels that university and polytechnic physics departments have an increasing responsibility to provide specialist physics teachers.  
Mr Maurice Edelson, the Institute's education officer and a member of the working party, emphasized that the survey related solely to the physics content of the BEd, not the way it prepared students to teach.

### New look for London museum



Visitors study a model of a fossil at the Natural History Museum.

Museums have a major role to play in seizing the imagination of girls and boys and inspiring them to study science, Mrs Williams told Natural History Museum staff and guests when she opened the new Hall of Human Biology on Tuesday.  
The Secretary of State said that the 1,000 square metres exhibition, with its exciting working models, films, games and other "interactive devices", was much more likely to succeed in putting science across to young people than the old-style Natural History Museum—which, she confessed, left her none the wiser when she visited it as a schoolgirl.  
The new museum is the first stage of a scheme to remodel the entire museum by the "Learn and Enjoy" style, though it may not be completed till century.  
Mrs Williams also opened the £7m palaeontology wing at South Kensington. It has seven floors providing 10,000 square metres of space for laboratories, offices, a library and storage for a collection of seven million fossils which Mrs Williams said was the best in the world, with the possible exception of the Smithsonian in Washington.  
As Mrs Williams pointed out, the dual ceremony symbolized the museum's two main functions: scientific research, and enjoyable education for the public.  
Dr R. H. Godley, the director, said the Human Biology exhibition was stunning, "a forerunner of a revolution".

### Part of RSG grant may be earmarked, Mrs Williams says

The Department of Education and Science is now actively considering the earmarking of part of the RSG grant within the Local Education Authorities, Mrs Shirley Williams, Secretary of State for Education and Science, has indicated.  
In evidence to an education, arts and leisure affairs select committee at the House of Commons this week she said: "My own feeling is that there is a place for specific grant funding within L.E.A. budgets. It was a continued topic of debate with local authorities taking the view that they did not want a greater element of central government control, she said.  
The DES is now gravely concerned over the findings of a survey completed earlier this month by the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers, which revealed that 80 per cent of the £7m allowed in 1977-78 will be used for other purposes.  
Mrs Williams told the committee the money had been allocated to help finance an "ambitious" plan to increase the number of in-service training places to 10,000 by 1980. But she warned: "The problems that have arisen raise the whole question of the inability of the DES to finance by specific grant."  
In a written statement to the sub-committee, which is examining the DES said: "The RSG arrange-

### Bradford plan rejected

Conservative-controlled Bradford District Council has rejected the Government's proposals for teacher training reorganization and has voted to end initial training at Bradford College—the 19,000-strong institution headed by former Labour Government advisor, Mr Eric Robinson.  
Last week the educational services committee overruled previous decisions by the Bradford colleges' academic planning board and the council's further education panel to accept the Government scheme.  
The Government has suggested that teacher training places in Bradford should be shared between Ilkley and Bradford colleges and that Blingley College should probably close. It also emphasized the need to retain the multi-racial courses at Bradford College.  
Now the council has proposed that all teacher education and associated higher education should be based in an institution formed from an amalgamation of Blingley and Ilkley Colleges.  
Mr Robinson, the college's academic board and its governors, are all opposed to the idea, and last week they petitioned MPs.  
Dr Jim Lynch, head of the school of education, said: "The removal of teacher education would accentuate the deprivation of an inner city area. It would cut off the opportunities of ethnic groups, many of whom live in the area immediately around the college."  
It would destroy "a unique experiment in multi-racial education and would undermine the comprehensive nature of the college."  
Mr Richard Knight, Bradford's director of educational services, said many education officers thought the 250,000 cost of the plan was too high. The Government's delay in announcing the decision made planning for the authority sector difficult.  
The 1972 White Paper, *Frame for Expansion*, suggested that there should be no net loss of places in both sectors should be the same.

### Minister suggests

Mr Williams, Secretary of State for Education and Science, suggested the establishment of a commission for education in international co-operation at London University yesterday.  
Speaking at the University's Institute of Education, he said it would be a most "financial development".  
Mr E. G. Edwards, vice-chancellor of Bradford University, is to retire next year. He has been vice-chancellor since it opened in 1966 and as principal of the Bradford College of Technology since 1957. He has been instrumental in introducing Technology to a univer-



Eric Robinson

### V-Cs oppose SISTERS

A working group of vice-chancellors has come out strongly against the idea of 'Special Institutions for Science and Technological Education and Research' (SISTERS) as defined in the recent report from the parliamentary Select Committee on Science and Technology.  
"It would be detrimental to a university to have its functions narrowly restricted by charter to training and research in engineering and applied sciences", they say.  
But some members of the group favour certain existing institutions being developed broadly along the lines proposed by the Robbins committee in 1963. The committee outlined a broader concept of SISTERS, saying that such institutions would concentrate on science and technology but should develop related subjects such as social studies, operational research, statistics and languages.  
The working group, which comprises 11 vice-chancellors under the chairmanship of Sir John Habakuk, of Oxford University, was set up in November to contribute to the general debate on universities' relationship with industry, and to consider issues arising from the select committee's third report.  
While agreeing with the select committee that high priority should be given to the training of engineers and scientists for employment in industry the group is against earmarked funds for this purpose. The group suggests an alternative to the UGC indicates in its guidance to universities that allowance has been made for extra money to be spent on engineering and technology students.

### OU fights 'money back' claim

Professor Russell Sannard, vice-chancellor of the Open University, is to meet government officials in an attempt to persuade them to drop or modify their demands that the OU pay back over £0.5m.  
Officials at the Treasury and the Department of Education and Science say that due to an error the university should have paid more than it was entitled to a month ago. The grant totalled £26.8m.  
At the moment the university at Milton Keynes has 54,488 undergraduates, but two years ago a prediction by the university predicted that in 1977 the student population

### Worcester loses new principal

Professor Walter James, former dean of educational studies at the Open University, is not to become Principal of Worcester College of Higher Education in September. In an unexpected move, he has withdrawn from the post to which he was appointed last December.  
Mr E. G. Peterson, present principal of the college, who leaves in the autumn, said this week that the decision had come as a "great shock". He denied that it was connected with his work, standing or status of the college. Professor James was not available for comment.

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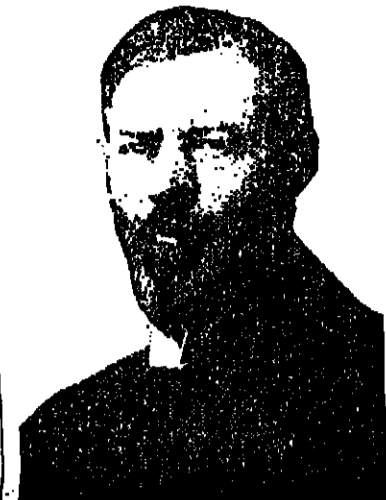
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BOOKS

Applying maths

Mathematical Modelling edited by J. Andrews and R. McLane. Butterworths, £3.95 ISBN 0 408 10601 8

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When striking a community for the first time an infectious disease rages with great virulence and causes many deaths, until the population eventually builds up a resistance and mortality declines.

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McNeill argues that human populations and disease-bearing organisms have settled in a state of unstable equilibrium. The first human illnesses were probably mutations of animal diseases...

The source of this nice round number in the Historia Augusta compiled 130 years after the event, which refers to a pestilence only, says that "in a single day" 5,000 men died in Rome and elsewhere.



A plague doctor of 1656, wearing protective clothing. The beak held spices thought to purify the air and the vial was used to avoid touching patients.

Even so, his law of epidemic behaviour—high initial mortality followed by declining virulence—is more often asserted than proved, particularly for earlier centuries when evidence is so often lacking.

For all its blemishes, including some execrable jargon, McNeill has written a stimulating book which captures more than the surface of the findings of medical historians and demographers.

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French outbreaks between 1740 and 1745. Volume two explores traditional views of the spread and efforts to relieve its victims.

As for the non-demographic consequences of plague, I have religious beliefs, products of the first few states of the epidemic and stimulated the profusion of white wash, tobacco, perfumes, jewelry as antidotes and so on.

Hatcher's book is more than a history of plagues, it is in fact 90 months of the author's thoughts on the evolution of population in England in the centuries following the Black Death.

But the essential feature of applied mathematics is the "application", that is, the formulation of an appropriate mathematical theory which captures some feature of reality.

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Medieval history in large and small compass

The Medieval European Community by D. J. A. Matthew. Batsford, £12.50 ISBN 0 7134 3254 3

Here are two books which have been written in the conviction that our own age has much to learn from the Middle Ages, but they are as different as chalk from cheese.

Dr Matthew displays a most enviable range of learning, has mastered both his sources and the secondary works of European scholarship, and has given us many new insights in his text and footnotes.

Jeon Gimpel, on the other hand, is not a professional historian, but a man of letters who has read widely and critically, and has been deeply impressed by the technological advances of the Middle Ages.

insular superiority" and to avoid the nationalistic preconceptions of nineteenth-century historians. This is an admirable ideal; the only difficulty is to realize it.

Matthew's book is probably not for those who do not seem to have a love of medieval history. His subtle argument leads him forward and backward in time and place in a way which the expert will follow without difficulty.

This is particularly evident in his desire to see Europe, not as a conglomerate of the three-field system, but as a whole. He is anxious to escape from the English attitude of

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